

D. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Section D.1 summarizes the comparison of the new and revised alternatives considered in this Supplemental Draft EIR. Section D.2 presents a revised comparison of all alternatives, incorporating the conclusions of Section D.1 and other changes in analysis resulting from comments on the Draft EIR. Section D.3 presents the Environmentally Superior Alternative, as required by CEQA. The analysis included in this section supercedes the conclusions described in the Draft EIR.

Conclusions in the Draft EIR regarding several alternatives have not changed and therefore are not further discussed in this Supplemental Draft EIR. These alternatives include the Northern Receiving Station and Zanker Road Substations, the Westerly Route and Westerly Upgrade Alternatives, and the 115 kV portion of the project along Trimble Road and Montague Expressway.

D.1 REVISED OR NEW ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT EIR

The following table summarizes the conclusions of the analysis of new or revised alternatives, detailed in Sections C.2 through C.9. These conclusions are incorporated into the comparison of alternatives presented in Section D.2, and the identification of the environmentally superior alternative (Section D.3). The conclusions below do not include consideration of the visual impacts of EMF mitigation, because, as discussed in Section C.8.3, that mitigation has not yet been defined.

Table D-1 Summary of Conclusions Regarding New Analysis

Changes Evaluated	Conclusions
US DataPort Substation Alternative	When compared with the proposed Los Esteros Substation site, there is very little difference. The two sites are comparable.
Northern Underground Alternative	This alternative is slightly preferred over the I-880-A Alternative and strongly preferred over the proposed route.
Modified I-880-A Alternative (at Connection with Proposed Route)	No significant difference between this route and the Draft EIR's I-880-A Alternative route. If the Modified I-880-A and proposed routes are constructed, the recommended route through the salt ponds would be that defined in Mitigation Measure V-3 where the new transmission line would follow the easterly pair of existing 115 kV lines.
Modified I-880-B Alternative	When compared with the Draft EIR's I-880-B Alternative, the revised I-880-B Alternative is preferred.
McCarthy Boulevard Alternative Segment:	This reroute of a portion of the proposed route south of Dixon Landing Road in order to avoid bird ponds and mitigation area would reduce impacts to birds, however the potential for collision with the new lines is still considered significant. The reroute would create a significant visual impact to trail users, and would degrade views at the northern entrance to the City of Milpitas and within the McCarthy Ranch development. Given the high value of bird habitat and the purposes of the adjacent Refuge (to provide habitat for migratory birds), the reroute is considered to be preferred over the proposed route.
Southern Underground Alternative	The proposed route is preferred over this alternative due to the geologic conditions (high potential for liquefaction and lateral spreading) that would affect an underground system and the visual impacts of the alternative near Dixon Landing Road.

D.2 REVISED COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

This section revisits the comparison of alternatives presented in Draft EIR Section D. The discussion is divided into three areas: northern area (equivalent to proposed route Mileposts 0.0 to 2.7), central area (proposed route Mileposts 2.7 to 4.1), and southern area (proposed route mileposts 4.1 to the substation).

D.2.1 Northern Area Alternatives

Table D-2 illustrates the comparison of alternatives in this portion of the project area. The key differences between alternatives in the northern area are the following:

- **Proposed Route:** This route passes through 1.3 miles of the Pacific Commons Preserve, which is under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and may not be permitted by them. In addition, the proposed route in the northern area would affect recreational trail users, cross more water bodies, and have greater potential for bird collisions with the lines. [Class I?]
- **I-880-A Alternative:** This alternative minimizes habitat and water body disturbance because the route follows the I-880 Freeway. One or two towers would be located within the Pacific Commons Preserve, but the Refuge has indicated that this use would likely be permitted. Construction would disturb adjacent businesses for short periods of time. [Class I?]
- **Northern Underground Alternative:** This alternative would eliminate the bird collision, visual, and recreational impacts of the overhead routes. It would have substantially greater (in both extent and duration) construction impacts, and there could be impacts to California tiger salamanders. In addition there is the potential for soil liquefaction if an earthquake occurred; this could damage the underground duct bank and possibly the dielectric cables. [Class I?]

The northern area also includes evaluation of a modification to the I-880-A Alternative, which PG&E suggested in order to reduce visual and bird collision impacts. This modified route was not found to offer environmental benefits over the I-880-A Alternative considered in the Draft EIR.

For the reasons summarized above and in Table D-2, the I-880-A Alternative is environmentally superior in the northern portion of the 230 kV transmission line.

D.2.2 Central Area Alternatives

Table D-3 summarizes impacts of the three routes through the Fremont business park area (the proposed route, the Underground Through Business Park Alternative, and the Modified I-880-B Alternative). The key differences in impact in this part of the project are the following:

- **Proposed Route:** This route passes high bird use areas and has the greatest potential for visual impacts

and disturbance to recreational trail users. Construction impacts would be minimal.

- **Underground Through Business Park Alternative:** This alternative would have a high level of construction impacts affecting business park occupants (air quality, noise, traffic), but the visual and bird collision impacts of the aboveground lines would be eliminated.
- **Modified I-880-B Alternative:** This route has a low risk of bird collision, low level of construction impact to business park occupants, and minimal impacts to recreationists. Visual impacts would be greater than for the underground segment, but less than the proposed route.

[insert table here]

The re-evaluation of the comparison of the three alternatives (including the revisions to the I-880-B Alternative) result in there being a very similar level of overall impact between the I-880-B Alternative and the combined I-880-A/Underground Through Business Park Alternative.

D.2.3 Southern Area Alternatives

There are three possible routes to connect the business park area with the substation: the proposed route (through the Fremont Airport property and the WPCP), the proposed route with McCarthy Boulevard Alternative segment, and the Southern Underground Alternative. The impacts are summarized as follows:

- **Proposed Route:** This route has significant bird collision impacts at the crossing of the mitigation ponds south of Dixon Landing Road, and through the WPCP. Other impacts in the southern area are minimal because there is limited access to the WPCP facility and the greater recreational trail use is east of Coyote Creek.
- **Proposed Route with McCarthy Boulevard Segment:** This segment would conflict with City of Milpitas visual policies, and would have greater visual impacts than the proposed or underground alternatives, but it would avoid the high bird use areas west of Coyote Creek.
- **Southern Underground Alternative:** This route would have minimal bird collision risk, and reduced visual impacts. However, due to the very high liquefaction potential of the soils along Coyote Creek, there is a significant risk of liquefaction and lateral spreading which could damage the duct bank and the cables.

The environmentally superior route in the southern area is the combination of the proposed route with the McCarthy Boulevard Alternative segment. Table D-3 summarizes impacts in this area in each issue area.

D.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ROUTE

Figure ES-2 (in the Executive Summary) presents the composite environmentally superior alternative based on the information contained in this Supplemental Draft EIR. Impacts are very similar for two sets of alternatives, so the map shows both as environmentally superior. The selection of the final route will be made by the CPUC in its decision on the project. The two similar routes are:

- The **I-880-B Alternative** and the **Underground Through Business Park Alternative** (with the I-880-A Alternative) are similar in overall impact because the I-880-B Alternative would have significantly fewer construction impacts but greater operational (especially visual) impacts, but the Underground Alternative would have substantial construction impacts.
- The **proposed Los Esteros Substation** site and the **US DataPort Substation Alternative** have very similar impacts, so both are shown as environmentally superior (in red).

The conclusions regarding comparison of the other alternatives remains unchanged from the Draft EIR:

- The proposed Trimble-Montague 115 kV Upgrade is environmentally superior to the Barber Lane and underground 115 kV alternative.
- The Westerly Route Alternative and Westerly Upgrade Alternative are inferior to the routes through the business park
- The proposed Los Esteros Substation and the US DataPort Substation Alternative sites are both environmentally superior to the Zanker Road and Northern Receiving Station Substation Site Alternatives.

E. REFERENCES

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